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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/939,211	08/24/2001	Daniel Lootz	7040-40	3319

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EXAMINER

THALER, MICHAEL H

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
	3731

DATE MAILED: 11/22/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/939,211	LOOTZ ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Michael Thaler	3731	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 23 September 2004.
 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) See Continuation Sheet is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1,5,6,8-10,12-18,20,44,64,67,70,71,74-78,81,82,85,86,89,90,94,100 and 105-113 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

Continuation of Disposition of Claims: Claims pending in the application are 1,5,6,8-10,12-18,20,44,64,67,70,71,74-78,81,82,85,86,89,90,94,100 and 105-113.

Art Unit: 3731

Claims 1, 5, 6, 8-10, 12-18, 20, 44, 64, 67, 70, 71, 74-78, 81, 82, 85, 86, 89, 90, 94, 100 and 105-113 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In claim 1, line 11 indicates that an annular support portion is formed by a bar element (singular). However, lines 7-8 ("the bar elements of the first annular support portion") indicate that the annular support portion is formed by bar elements (plural). Thus, it is unclear if each annular support portion is formed by a single bar element or a plurality of bar elements.

Claims 1, 5, 6, 8-10, 12-18, 20, 44, 64, 67, 70, 71, 74-78, 81, 82, 85, 86, 89, 90, 94, 100 and 105-113 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Duerig et al. (6,190,406) in view of Brown et al. (2003/0083736). Duerig et al. disclose a plurality of annular support portions 52 comprising bar elements 60 and connecting bars 70, wherein the connecting bars 70 engage in a region of the bar elements of the first annular support portion that projects in the longitudinal direction (in the embodiment described in col. 5, lines 46-53 in which one end is attached to the strut rather than the loop, noting that the entire strut projects in the longitudinal direction particularly in view of [0060] of applicant's

Art Unit: 3731

specification which indicates that a portion of the bar element "projects less far in the first direction") and wherein the connecting bars engage a central portion of the second annular support portion (in the embodiment described in col. 5, lines 46-53 in which the other end is attached to the strut rather than the loop). Duerig et al. fail to disclose a direction of curvature changing in the central region of the bar element. However, Brown et al. teach that the central region of a meandering bar element of a stent should be curved (A close inspection of figure 3 reveals the central region of each meandering bar element as being curved. That is, each bar element of the V-shaped bar flares outwardly from the apex of the V and thus is curved in one direction and then changes direction at the central region of the bar element about midway between the apexes.) This shape has the self-evident advantage of providing more support to the blood vessel along the edges of the meandering bar element. It would have been obvious to incorporate this shape into the Duerig et al. bar element so that it too would have this advantage. Note that the Brown et al. bar element has a direction of curvature which changes in the central region between two turning points and also has limbs of a V-shape as claimed. As to claim 5, in the embodiment described in col. 5, lines 46-53 in which one end of the

Art Unit: 3731

connecting bar 70 is attached to the strut rather than the loop, the connecting bars 70 engage the strut "near a turning point" as claimed since "near" is a relative term and any point on the strut is "near a turning point" as compared to other portions of the stent, for example. As to claim 6, Duerig et al. disclose an embodiment in which one end of the connecting bar 70 is attached to a strut and the other end is attached to a loop, noting the term "and/or" in reference to each end of the connecting bar in the phrase "wherein one end is attached to one strut and/or loop, and another end attached to a strut and/or loop on an adjacent hoop" in col. 5, lines 46-53. In this embodiment, the end of the connecting bar 70 that is attached to a loop "engages a point that projects furthest in the longitudinal direction" as claimed, since figures 4 and 4a show the end of the connecting bar 70 attached to a loop at a point which projects furthest in the longitudinal direction even though it is attached slightly off center to the apex of the loop. In any event, the "point that projects furthest in the longitudinal direction" is considered to be the "turning point" which is considered to be the entire curved portion near the apex. As to claims 10 and 105, note col. 7, lines 39-60 of Duerig et al. As to claim 16, for example, Duerig et al. fail to disclose the stent material in a stress-induced martensitic

Art Unit: 3731

state at body temperature. However, it is old and well known in this art to design make shape memory alloys such that they are in a stress-induced martensitic state at body temperature in order to facilitate entry into the patient's body. It would have been obvious to make the Duerig et al. the stent material in a stress-induced martensitic state at body temperature so that it too would have this advantage. The above well known in the art statement is taken to be admitted prior art because applicant failed to traverse the examiner's assertion (M.P.E.P. 2144.03). As to claims 18, 85, 86 and 90, the width of the Duerig et al. bar element varies over the length thereof (col. 6, lines 8-39). As to claims 94 and 100, the center line of the Duerig et al. bar element is in the shape of an elliptical arc in the region of the turning points when the stent is expanded, as seen in figure 5, for example. Also, Brown et al. disclose an elliptical arc in the region of the turning points (paragraph [0017]).

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 5, 6, 8-10, 12-18, 20, 44, 64, 67, 70, 71, 74-78, 81, 82, 85, 86, 89, 90, 94, 100 and 105-113 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michael

Art Unit: 3731

Thaler whose telephone number is (703) 308-2981. The examiner can normally be reached Monday to Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Anhtuan T. Nguyen can be reached on (703)308-2154. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703)308-0858.

mht
11/16/04



MICHAEL THALER
PRIMARY EXAMINER
ART UNIT 3731